

3 March 1994

"**Christopher Talks with Asian Journalists About His Trip.**" Secretary of State Christopher's press briefing for Asian reporters on his upcoming visit to the Pacific Rim region. (940303)

Text: *EPF405 03/03/94

CHRISTOPHER TALKS WITH ASIAN JOURNALISTS ABOUT HIS TRIP (Transcript: Secretary of State on March 2, 1994) (3650) Following is the official transcript: (begin official transcript) INTERVIEW OF SECRETARY OF STATE WARREN CHRISTOPHER BY ASIAN JOURNALISTS Washington, D.C. March 2, 1994 (Accuracy of questions cannot be verified) SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Thank you all for coming in on this very snowy day. First, let me just make two or three preliminary remarks. I've laid out six strategic priorities for the United States foreign policy, and it's very interesting to me as I think about this trip, it gives me an opportunity to work on and advance at least three of the priorities.

The first of my strategic priorities was to promote global trade so as to improve the economic security of the United States. I think it's quite obvious that Asia, being the world's most promising market, is a very fertile area for discussion of economic matters and to promote global trade.

The APEC conference in Seattle was an aspect of that first priority, and working together with the nations of the Asia-Pacific region on GATT was another aspect. So I look forward to advancing that particular strategic priority. Just for purposes of completeness, the second priority was to modernize and renew NATO and our transatlantic relationships with Europe.

The third of the priorities was to promote reform in Russia and the Newly Independent States.

But now coming to the one that is really central to the trip, and that was the fourth of the priorities was to enhance our relationships in Asia and to promote the new Pacific community. Obviously, this trip will be fundamental to that purpose.

The fifth was peace in the Middle East. The sixth, interestingly, was the whole cluster of global issues to bring them into the mainstream of American foreign policy, and that cluster of global issues includes non-proliferation which I'll be focusing on in China and, of course, is a great concern with respect to North Korea. It also includes human rights which will be a central aspect of the trip to China.

So, as you can see, this trip to Asia that I'm about to embark on enables me to advance three of the six of America's most fundamental strategic priorities.

This will be my fourth trip to Asia in the little over a year that I've been in office, which itself is a reflection of the importance that the President attaches to Asia. Of course, his first trip abroad was to the Tokyo Summit, and his leadership at the APEC Conference, I think, is some reflection of the significance that he attaches to Asian relationships.

As you know, I'll be first stopping in Australia and proceeding to Japan, then to China, and finally to a stop in Vladivostok where I'll be meeting with Foreign Minister Kozyrev of Russia, basically an opportunity for us to have a place to meet on I believe it will be next Sunday night.

We've had some important developments in Asia in the last few weeks. The lifting of the embargo with respect to Vietnam, the changing of our relationship with **New Zealand** in the sense that we are no longer going to avoid high-level contacts — I mention those only to stress the fact that Asia is constantly on our mind, and its importance brings it back into focus on a regular basis.

We're no longer Eurocentric, but we accord great importance to Asian-Pacific relationships, including, of course, Australia, as well as to the European relationships. We're not denigrating the European relationships, but I think perhaps for the first time the Administration has come into office emphasizing the Asian-Pacific relationships and recognizing because of the trade opportunities and the importance of Asia in the future that it deserves at least equal billing and equal attention.

With that sort of broad scene setter as to the way I feel about the trip, I welcome you to ask questions, and I'll try to respond. We'll do it however you like. Perhaps we'll go around the table and one question each, and then we can see how long my voice lasts. I testified for almost three hours on Capitol Hill this morning, so if you hear a little scratchiness or indeed if you see a little fatigue, you'll know what that comes from.

QUESTION: North Korean nuclear problem. The Republic of Korea and the United States have said that they will try to resolve all issues relating to North Korea with a total approach in third round talks between the United States and North Korea.

Considering that the first two rounds of the talks took up at the most nearly two weeks, full resolution in the third round seems unlikely. What prospect do you see for this third round? Do you think that this third round can be one (inaudible) discussion? If not, what then?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Let me first say that the third round of discussions will take place only if the inspection which are supposed to start today are fully completed; but, if they are fully completed, then the third round will take place. I hope not to disappoint too much, but it would be too high an expectation to think that the third round would resolve all the outstanding issues between the two countries.

I do think that the third round of discussions will be broad and thorough and will involve many aspects of the relationship between the two countries, of course, the nuclear issues are critical with the United States and really the West wanting assurance that North Korea would renew its involvement as a full participant in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that North Korea would proceed with the talks, looking toward a nuclear-free peninsula.

But beyond that the conversations can be quite extensive, discussing such issues as the proliferation of other kinds of weapons, human rights issues, trade issues, the improvement of relations between North Korea and the United States, as well as with other countries.

Generally speaking, I think, the United States would want to emphasize in those talks the benefits to North Korea and the people of North Korea joining the community of peaceful nations in a way that would enable North Korea to reap the benefits from participation in the trading system and in the other international organizations.

So a third round will be important, but it would be too much to hope or think that it will resolve all the outstanding issues. It can go on for several meetings, but it would not be of indefinite duration.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, may I hear your views on the importance of Sino-U.S. relations, and how would you assess or evaluate the relations between the two countries since the Seattle Sino-U.S. summit last November?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: The relations between the United States and China, I think, entered a new phase last September when President Clinton directed me to develop a broader set of relationships with the Chinese officials. I took that matter up with Foreign Minister Qian at our meeting in New York, and he welcomed a broadening of our relationships to try to ensure that we had them in a progressive phase rather than going downhill.

The result of that meeting was a series of meetings between U.S. Officials and Chinese officials so as to broaden the relationship. For example, Secretary of the Treasury Bentsen went to China to discuss a wide range of matters but including financial and trade matters.

The Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, has also had contacts at high levels in China. I believe the Secretary of Agriculture may have been there or been in contact. In any event, starting last September, we deliberately broadened the contacts with Chinese officials, and we've also at the same time sought to deepen them.

In that respect, I've met, I believe, four times with Foreign Minister Qian, and I'm looking forward to meeting with him again in China.

So I think our relationships are more deeply engaged. We are two very prominent, even, I think it's fair to say, great nations with tremendous resources, and it's important that we have communication so that we understand each other's viewpoints and problems.

That new, broader relationship was symbolized most importantly by President Clinton's meeting with the President of China around the edges of the Seattle meeting. And I think much has flowed from that meeting, because we have been trying to build on the new relationships established between the two Presidents at the meeting on the island outside of Seattle; and it, of course, is the backdrop for my trip to Beijing where I'll be, I guess, about two weeks from today, where I'll be discussing the full range of issues: security issues, political issues, international problems, trade, non-proliferation and, last but not least, human rights.

QUESTION: I think you've just come back from the NEC meeting regarding a measure against Japan, and have you come up to the final decision against the Japanese and is the announcement going to be soon?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: That decision, of course, will be by the President. I assume you're speaking of the decision with respect to the so-called Super 301.

QUESTION: Yes. SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: That decision will be made by the President, and his own timing is one that will be determinative there. One thing I would want to stress is that whatever decision is made, it will be made in the context of the United States desire to promote global trade and to open markets. I wouldn't want to predict exactly when the President will be deciding, but I would say that the issue is ripe for decision, although the timing is always to be left to the President. You can follow up on that.

QUESTION: So do you expect the decision would come before you go to Tokyo or after that, after you consult with the Japanese officials?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: I would not want to narrow his alternatives as to when he might announce the decision he's made. It could come before or after.

QUESTION: But it's very soon. SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: If it was after, it wouldn't be very soon. I don't mean to fence with you, but a person in my position really has to protect the prerogatives of the President, and you're doing your job of trying to find out exactly when. So we're somewhat at odds on that

QUESTION: I think these are the first formal senior level ASEAN talks that have been held in Australia since about 1989. Since then, of course, there have been a lot of changes in Australian foreign policy. Foremost is the pushing to Asia of which APEC is a prime example.

One very interesting point about this push is the government's feeling that if Australia becomes a republic, it will make it far easier for Australia to conduct an independent, forward-looking foreign policy with its immediate neighbors in the region.

I wonder, given your long experience in international affairs and speaking as Secretary of State, what difference do you think there may be for Australia in terms of how it's perceived in the region and in the U.S. if it were to become a republic?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: I would think that's a purely internal matter for Australia. Our relations with Australia are superb at the present time, whether you're talking about security matters where we fought side by side and so dependent upon Australia or political issues where we are in close harmony or trade issues where we have a very close relationship.

I would be sure we would continue to have the excellent relationship that we have with Australia. I would not think it to be a matter of form. But I would stress that that's a decision for the people and government of Australia. I think an outsider would be quite unwise to try to express a preference or an opinion.

Q: Can I follow up. Another interesting aspect of this pushing to Asia in Prime Minister's concern that U.S. concentration on trying to pressure countries like China and Indonesia to improve their human rights records, may in fact, jeopardize trade relations. he made these feelings fairly well known when he was here last September.

Has he got a point, that perhaps U.S. insistence could put those relations in some jeopardy?

CHRISTOPHER: The United States has a number of main tenets of its foreign policy, one of which is to promote global growth through enhanced trade. Another is to ensure the security of the United States and its treaty allies. Another is to promote our American values, frequently referred to under the human rights rubric.

Most of the time those goals are entirely consistent. But sometimes they need to be balanced. There are certainly instances where the pursuit of our human rights policies or our non-proliferation policies come into contact — sometimes they come into controversy — with our desire to advance or enhance trade. That's what makes the job of statesmen or presidents very difficult. Because only they can sort out that choice and try to achieve the balance.

There are many instances in which our human rights policy or our non-proliferation policy is criticized by people either in this country or other countries who would like to see the trade to forward. But in some instances, we will find those values to be predominant. As I say, I think those can be harmonized, but sometimes the president, or those he delegates the decision to, will have to make the hard choice.

Q: North Korea's nuclear problems, again. The U.S. government has said that the end of the North Korean nuclear problem will involve full North Korean compliance with the IAEA regime. The nuclearization declarations — in South Korea. Even if North Korea were to comply with the IAEA but not with the declarations, what would be your government's position and what would your government do?

CHRISTOPHER: Our goal for the Korean Peninsula is that it be non-nuclear. That is a goal that we will continue to pursue.

The initial goal we have, of course, is compliance with the IAEA regime and to enable the IAEA inspectors to conduct the inspections that they regard as being necessary to ensure that there has not been the development of a nuclear weapon or the reprocessing of plutonium to bring it into weapons grade.

I would say that if there is compliance with the non-proliferation treaty, compliance with the inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, that would be a very important step forward, but it would not achieve the goal of a non-nuclear peninsula; and the United States and the other principal nations in the region, I think, would continue to pursue that goal so as to ensure that not only has there not been any recent development of a nuclear weapon but there were not nuclear weapons developed at an earlier time before North Korea acceded to the non-proliferation treaty.

Q: You said this would be your fourth visit to Asia. I don't know how many times you have visited China, and what places are you going to see besides discussions with Chinese officials?

CHRISTOPHER: I visited China when I was in private life, as a lawyer, and enjoyed a trip through northern China, from the coast into what was formerly Manchuria and then into Beijing.

This time, I'll be going to Beijing where we'll have meetings on Saturday. And then on Sunday, I hope to spend time visiting some of the cultural sites in Beijing. And if there's time, we'll take an out-of-town trip. Sometimes it's unpredictable; it may be necessary to have official meetings in Beijing on Sunday. But, if not, I would intend to use that day to acquaint myself with some of the culture of Beijing that I many have missed on my last trip there — my last trip as a private citizen.

On that trip, I also went to Shanghai. Of course, I've been to Hong Kong a number of times.

On Monday, I'll have further meetings. This will be a short trip to China that will not afford me as much time as I would like to understand the culture of that great country, but at least I'll make a start on Sunday.

Q: You didn't really say about the decision yet, of the last question. If the president announces some sanction against Japan, don't you have any concern that this would trigger a so-called trade war and undermine the effort by the Hosokawa government — political reform — and damage the overall relationship with the United States and Japan?

CHRISTOPHER: Taking the last part first, there are basically three aspects to the relationship: the security aspect, the diplomatic and political aspect is the second one, and the third one is economics and trade. Our relationship on the first two aspects is excellent, and I would not expect it to be negatively affected by the economic matters that we're going to be discussing, or economic actions to be taken.

Indeed, it's the goal of the United States to try to have our economic relationship on as sound a footing as our security and political relationships.

Going back to the first part of your question. If the president were to issue an executive order on Super 301, that would not involve sanctions at the present time. That simply is a mechanism through which the parties might resolve their matters over time. There's nothing automatic about subsequent actions under Super 301. It's simply a mechanism to permit the parties to resolve the matters.

I also think that, as President Clinton and Prime Minister Hosokawa stressed, our relationship is mature enough so that we can conduct these discussions involving trade without interfering with the rest of the relationship or without having broader ramifications along the lines that you mention of a trade war. I think we'll be very conscious of the importance of maintaining the solid economic relationships that we have; simply trying to improve them and trying to achieve a redress of the tremendous surplus that Japan has in its trade relationships not only with the United States but with the world as a whole.

As you know, the trade balance in Japan's favor is over \$120,000 million; with the United States alone, between \$50,000 million and \$60,000 million. The Japanese leaders themselves recognize that those imbalances are far too large and that something should be done about them.

Q: there seems to be a perception in Australia, as well as throughout the region — in quite a number of countries — that a U.S. heavy handedness, in some ways, is perhaps to blame for the escalation of this U.S.-Japan trade dispute.

The aim of the United States is to provide some ways to measure some so-called objective criteria to determine or whether or not the steps that Japan is taking will achieve that marketing opening which we think is essential in order to achieve a redressing of that trade imbalance.

For instance, our foreign minister has basically suggested that the United States is seeking managed trade, although I know the administration denies that. Prime Minister Keating (inaudible) Japanese analysis of the dispute, saying that the real problems are underlying savings and balances between the two countries.

There's a concern that this sort of approach may be extended to the Export Enhancement Program. The European Union has just assured Australia that in the lead-up to the implementation of the Uruguay Round, they won't be using their agricultural subsidies to markets.

I wonder if you would be able to give a similar assurance now that the same will not be done with the U.S. agricultural programs?

CHRISTOPHER: Let me comment on both parts of your question. As to the first part of your question, what's involved here is whether or not the Japanese government has complied with the Framework Agreement that was entered last July.

We believe that there was no substantial compliance with the Framework Agreement that was entered into either in macro-economic terms or in the sectoral terms that are set forth in the Framework Agreement. So I think the charge that we're being heavy-handed is unjustified. Because what we're trying to do is to carry out a framework agreement that was freely entered into.

With respect to so-called EAP, the GATT agreement goes a long ways to limit the effect of Export Enhancement Programs and to very carefully circumscribe the way they will be effective.

The United States has been careful to limit the effect of such programs with respect to countries that are not themselves involved in subsidies. So I think I can give assurance that the United States will continue its policy of trying to ensure that such programs do not have any negative effect on non-subsidizing countries.

They're only designed as a tool to react to those countries that distort trade themselves by subsidies.

Q: How do you think about diplomatic relationships with North Korea and the United States?

CHRISTOPHER: I think that prospect is some distance down the road. But if there are serious talks, the so-called third round of talks, that that prospect can be held out if the parties make progress on other issues. It will take, I think, a number of different steps in between where we are now before we would have anything like full diplomatic relations. That is the prospect that can be held over time if North Korea will come into the family of nations and conduct itself in a way that we believe would justify full diplomatic relations. We would look forward to that day.

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